Context, Thought, and Learning: ShiraDest publications Offers Project Do Better

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Two Ships? Narratives Matter...

July 4, 12026 books autobiography, BlackHistory, mlk, slavery ShiraDestProjectDoBetter

Thanks again to NPR for reminding us that '*Gentlemen*' founding the Jamestown colony arrived on a ship called *The White Lion*, in 1619, carrying slaves to *the Old Dominion* the year before the *Mayflower* landed further North, and (my library does not have this book, yet, so I don't know if Reynolds mentions the Headright System that they used to gather in money and land grants as they gathered in people being sentenced to "transportation" for crimes like stealing a loaf of bread, as well as slaves, for the expendable labor force needed to colonize…) that

"Frederick Douglass resorted to the "two ships" metaphor frequently, while Lincoln avoided it, hoping to preserve a unified ship of state. Meanwhile, Southern descendants of *Cavaliers* [emphasis added by me -Ni…] invoked the *Mayflower* to emphasize the intolerance and "cruel, persecuting" character of the Puritans." … "Reynolds quotes … Mark Twain … as saying that " Sir Walter Scott "… with his …historical romances … did measureless harm; more real and lasting harm, perhaps, than any other individual that ever wrote …"

which reminds us that fiction, as President Lincoln is famously said to have commented to Mrs. Beecher Stow that she was

"the little woman who wrote the book that started this great war"

–**books**, even or especially fiction books, **matter**. If "Nathaniel Hawthorne's anti-Puritan novel, *The Scarlet Letter*, and, even more,"

the "medieval historical romances" of Sir Walter could make such a difference, then so can the Work of which

Toni Morrison spoke. We must continue to bear witness, as she reminded us, even those of you who are not Black women writers, but especially us, the women who have been named with the slurs reserved for us by racists who would reduce us to *the N- word* and to the silence of our enslaved ancestresses. We must reject that fear of the portly pink faced boy blocking the door on that first day of school in Old Virginia, and ignore his naming of us with a word meant to instill the fear of lynchings-past, and we must remind everyone of that silenced ship of which Frederick Douglass spoke, the one driving *the ship of State* in the direction of the South's *Peculiar Institution*, and of tyrannical euphemism, and of terrorism hidden behind hoods and robes. The cautionary tale of the two ships, the *White Lion* vs the *Mayflower*, must be remembered for what has been covered up and forgotten ("pasamos pagina y tenemos paz, y despues, gloria…" as the Spaniards say: turning the page to forget, bringing peace, and then glory, which is pretty much exactly what has happened since the **writings** of both F. Douglass and Dr. King have been swept under the carpet in favor of vain memorials of hollow images. That is why ***The Project Do Better by ShiraDest Publications FUND*** begins with advocating *full* literacy and early childhood education starting with the children and single parents of *Bright Beginnings in DC* who strive to Do Better, with material help from the **GWCF**

Project Do Better:

and with a few free ideas from Project Do Better, because we can Do Better, for

Enough For All, in Four Phases

the entire world.

Injustice Delenda Est,

Nia (fka Shira)

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About ShiraDestProjectDoBetter

D. Antonia ("Nia") Jones is founder of #ProjectDoBetter, a long term plan proposal for community building, and a published poet, academic author, and advocate for improving our #PublicDomainInfrastructure. Her other book, Stayed on Freedom's Call, on Black-Jewish Cooperation in DC, is freely available via the Internet Archive. She has organized community events such as film discussions, multi-ethnic song events, and cooperative presentations, and is a native of Washington, DC. She promotes peaceful planning, NVC and the Holocene Calendar, and is also a writer. More information at https://shiradest.wordpress.com/ View all posts by ShiraDestProjectDoBetter →

1 thought on "Two Ships? Narratives Matter…"

★ ShiraDestProjectDoBetter

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What's important is not whether this *Work* of which Toni Morrison spoke is futile or even recognized, but that we stood up and tried, even if only to bear witness to the lost possibilities, and to those possibilities which are still within our grasp. Not to have spoken at all is the greatest loss, waste, and shame.

Injustice Delenda Est,

Ni

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